UDOT Research News

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Technology Corner

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How To Acquire More Info On Past & Present Studies

Contact any one of the above UDOT Personnel

Got Some Ideas On Investigations That Could Be Conducted:

in the Development Section?

contact those listed above

in the Research Section?

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PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
www.dot.state.ut.us/res

UDOT Experimental Features Program

The Development Section of the UDOT Research Division currently sponsors over forty test sites for new products on State highways and bridges. These experimental features provide an opportunity for new product testing or other comparison tests. R & D personnel Ken Berg, Dan Avila, and Barry Sharp administer this program which operates under the auspices of the Development Section and the New Products Evaluation Panel.

Historically, the test sections were spawned from a need to verify new product compliance with state specifications and technical requirements. The program started as a small effort with few products being compared, and the tests were aimed at durability and performance evaluation. More recently, the program grew larger as more products became available from competing vendors touting improved technologies and materials for better performance. With the experience gleaned from initial test sections, UDOT personnel, in collaboration with outside vendors, have developed more stringent technical specifications for improvement of product performance. The development and improvement cycle of standard specifications is still taking place at UDOT and is one of the driving forces behind this Department's commitment to provide better transportation services and products.

The success of an experimental feature is closely measured by the champion's involvement in the project and the support he/she is able to generate within the Region/Division where the project is located. In most cases, a champion identifies the problem or need, contacts the Development Engineer in the R & D Division, explains the challenge at hand and presents any other information relevant to the project. The Development Section investigates the project, determines its size and scope, and gathers available information from other sources. Finally, the Development Engineer takes the information gathered and coordinates the preparation of a work plan for the experimental feature. The work plan serves as a guide to install, test and evaluate the product in question. A work plan usually incorporates a problem statement, an objective, location of the test section, cost, time for test completion, schedule for data evaluation and deliverables in the form of interim and final reports. Although the Development Section takes an active role in setting up the test section and in evaluating the results obtained, its purpose is to serve as a resource to the champion and other personnel directly involved in the study. A successful experimental feature is not measured by the quality of the research work, how well the product performed, or how encouraging the results are.

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True success is only achieved when the study findings and recommendations are implemented in response to a specific need. In other words, the success of the experimental feature is directly proportional to the champion's involvement and participation in the study. Such success is measured by the champion's ability to implement the study findings and act as an agent for change within the Department when needed.

Project implementation can occur in many different ways. It can be direct (in the form of a new standard, a special provision, a policy or simply a memorandum of understanding) or indirect (through a newsletter, a website posting or just by word of mouth). Implementation requires a concerted effort, with periodic follow up from champions and researchers to ensure the transmission of study findings and recommendations. Proper implementation also acts as a two way street, where the information flows in both directions, thus affording researchers and champions additional feedback and comments from end users.

The Research Division understands the importance of disseminating the information collected in research studies and experimental features. For this reason, a new website containing specific information on research studies and experimental features was recently launched. The Research Division website also contains much information on retired projects and experimental features, a useful resource for those seeking information on previously published documents and studies. Log on to **www.dot.state.ut.us/res**, and click the Experimental Features button to learn more about studies currently underway. This site presents data in tabulated format containing a description of current projects, their objectives and location, the product in question, test section evaluation dates, etc. We encourage the reader to peruse the Research website and become acquainted with the information available therein. The user may perform a keyword search to find data on the topic of choice by typing a keyword into the field at the top of the page and clicking the Search UDOT button. All available documents containing the selected keyword will be displayed. The user may choose any of the documents listed and click on the active links to view the document location and find out its availability for download.

At the present time, only selected documents (Newsletters and Research Study abstracts) are available for download from the Research website. These documents have been stored in portable document format (PDF) and will require the Adobe Acrobat software to download and read. Once inside the document, additional keyword searches may be performed using the "Find" tool located in the Acrobat Tool Palette (the "Find" tool is easily identified by the binocular icon). For a copy of published reports, please contact David Watts (801-965-4333), Technology Transfer Engineer at the Research Division.

We welcome your comments and suggestions regarding the Research website. Please include your opinion about the usefulness of the information presented, and the site's ease of navigation. You may go to **www.dot.state.ut.us/res/WebDesign/feedback.htm** and fill out the survey form, including your name, title, company name, phone number and email address. Let us know how we can better serve you!

UDOT GOING THE EXTRA MILE

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